

# The Sun

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## A Big Cut in Steel Prices Inevitable.

The theory that present steel prices, or prices approaching those now prevailing, will be maintained because of the call upon America for steel with which to rebuild Europe is grossly absurd.

There was no fighting on English soil; no destruction of property in England save the little damage done by air raids. Germany, Austria and Italy suffered very little damage. The destruction of property was confined almost wholly to France and Belgium.

It would not be unwarranted exaggeration to say that during the entire war there has not been as much steel destroyed in wrecked buildings as is contained in the Woolworth Building alone. The reason for this is that the buildings of devastated France were practically all constructed of brick and stone. There were no steel buildings as we know them in America, and in the work of restoration the old methods of construction will be followed. There will be little call for steel—certainly no more than France herself can furnish.

And what is true of France in this respect is true of Belgium, where the property destruction was relatively small as compared with France. Belgium will not need our steel for reconstruction.

Moreover, both France and Belgium will not break their necks to rebuild destroyed towns in a minute. They will take their time about it. It is their way of doing things. All Europe, in fact, takes its time, and plenty of it, in public improvements, and private capital works in the same way.

We may as well, therefore, dismiss at once the matter of rebuilding Europe as a price sustainer for American steel and iron. Confined largely to domestic demand when the Government ceases to be a large customer, and this will soon happen, steel mills will find a restricted call for their products at war prices or anything approaching them.

The building trade cannot, in the exercise of common sense, come into the market now as a large buyer of steel and other building materials. Buildings erected at the present cost of materials and labor could not possibly compete with the buildings put up before the era of war prices.

The railroads, to be sure, need steel for upkeep—new engines, new cars and rail renewals—but under Government control will there be large purchases for this purpose? There obviously will be no new roads in the near future, and the old ones will of necessity be operated on an economy basis.

So without the job of rebuilding Europe for our steel mills, without big Government orders, without big railroad orders and without big building trade orders, there can be no demand for steel that will hold up one corner of present steel prices. When the Government has finished with the steel mills, steel will go begging in the market until prices come down to a point that will justify intelligent men in placing orders for steel.

It is a question of reasonable prices for steel, and that quickly, or else steel mills. There is no other solution of the problem, and idle steel mills mean low prices for steel—not infrequently starvation prices.

## The Pardons of Mixer and Vincent.

While the President's course in pardoning Lieutenant-Colonel George W. Mixer and Lieutenant-Colonel J. G. Vincent, whose violation of the law in transacting business for the Government with corporations in which they were owners was brought to

light in CHARLES E. HUGHES'S inquiry into aircraft production, is unusual, it is not unprecedented or open to criticism. While there was no question of their violation of the law, it was agreed that their acts had been committed innocently and in no way injured the Government. Consequently the President granted his pardons before prosecution was undertaken, giving his reasons thus:

"He [the President] believes that the two gentlemen concerned were entirely innocent of any improper or selfish intention, and that their service to the Government, which has been of the highest value and of a most disinterested sort, deserves the most cordial recognition."

## Of the President's pardon power

BOUTWELL gives this succinct outline:

"The power of pardon conferred by the Constitution upon the President is unlimited, except in cases of impeachment. It extends to every offence known to the law, and may be exercised at any time after its commission, either before legal proceedings are taken, or during their pendency, or after conviction and judgment."

"The power is not subject to legislative control."

"A pardon reaches the punishment prescribed for an offence, and the guilt of the offender. If granted before conviction [as in the present cases] it prevents any of the penalties and disabilities consequent upon conviction from attaching; if granted after conviction, it removes the penalties and disabilities, and restores him to all his civil rights. It gives him a new credit and capacity. There is only this limitation to its operation: It does not restore offices forfeited, or property or interests vested in others, in consequence of the conviction and judgment."

In the case of a special pardon, as distinguished from an act of amnesty, "to avail the criminal it must be judicially appear to have been accepted and for this reason it must be specially pleaded." Thus, if a person accused of crime "has obtained a pardon before arraignment, and instead of pleading it in bar he pleads the general issue, he shall be deemed to have waived the benefit of it, and cannot afterward avail himself of it in arrest of judgment." As no steps, beyond the recommendations made by Mr. Hughes, have been taken for the prosecution of the Lieutenant-Colonels whom the President has pardoned, it is to be assumed that their cases will now be dropped and we shall hear no more of them.

## President Wilson's Railway Views

Clear and Sound.

That part of President Wilson's message which asked the Congress members to give particular consideration to our policy with the railways determined nothing and pretended to determine nothing about them. It did emphasize forcefully the gravity of this national problem. It did portray with lucidity the impossibility of ever going back to the old days and the old ways. It did declare flatly that the Government could never again forbid the roads to do what they have been compelled to do under Director-General McAdoo; never again deny their rates sufficient to support them, restricting them on the one hand, starving them on the other, and expect them to survive either as sound financial institutions or as efficient, safe public servants.

Whether the roads go back to their owners or remain in the hands of the Government, the operation of the national system by the Director-General has taught the Government and has taught the public enough a thousand times over to justify the Government's experiment as a war emergency. Nobody can think now of the wildest political ranter could no longer maintain—that without adequate revenue railroads can maintain their trackage, terminals and rolling stock in proper condition, can build for the future, can do anything but head for the scrap heap. Nobody is going to listen to the old cant that the carriers must not be allowed to pool their business or combine their efforts or divide their burdens when that is the way not only to help the railroads to better conditions but to assure the public of better or cheaper service. Nobody is going to try to make votes out of a proposition to bleed the railroads white when these railroads are the very arteries of the nation.

President Wilson sees all this clearly. Unquestionably Congress also sees it now as no other Congress has seen it in a generation. It was therefore a wise thing and a fair thing for Mr. Wilson to put this question before the Congress members in exactly the manner he put it. This present Congress can do little or nothing with the problem. Probably it will not try. It will leave it to the next Congress—Republican in the House, Republican in the Senate. This will give time for real study and real work on the knotty question. It will give both the Democratic party and the Republican party the opportunity to decide what shall be done with it as a national issue at the next general election. It will give the American people the material they need before making their final decision as to whether the railroads shall be operated, indeed owned and operated, by private individuals or by the Government.

When President Wilson took over the roads THE SUN said that it had no doubt his action was both sound and necessary because of the condition in which the railroads had been left by the starvation policy of the Interstate Commerce Commission and because of the unbearable strain of the war emergency. We also said that if the Government proved by its

actual operation of the roads that public ownership was a better thing for the shippers and for the country than private ownership, undoubtedly that result would lodge the roads permanently in the hands of the Government.

The Government has proved nothing of the kind. Taking the roads on the bad condition they were in, it is not to be wondered that the Government made no success of the experiment. But it still remains for the Government to show between now and the next national election whether it can give a better service than private ownership, or whether, if it cannot give a better service, it can at least give a cheaper service.

We have aimed to be fair with the Government in its operation during the war. We shall aim to be fair with it in its operation after the war. But if the Government cannot do better in the next two years than it has done in the last year, if it cannot do immensely better, it ought to be an easy thing for the American people to decide in 1920 that the railways shall be both owned and operated by private capital, enterprise, energy and brains. And if this is the decision of the nation it also must be decided, as President Wilson makes clear, that the Legislative and Administrative Government, while still exercising a proper and needful control, must not force the roads to starve, but must permit them to be supported; must not drive them to the scrap heap, but must let them grow and thrive until they are once more the incomparable transportation system of the world.

## Nothing but a Coincidence.

The circumstance of President Wilson having sailed on the third anniversary of the departure of HENRY FOON's peace ship should give not the slightest apprehension to those who are sympathetic with the present voyage. Not only are the captains of the two adventures widely dissimilar in the eyes of Europe, but there is a striking difference in the character and occupations of the two sets of voyagers.

Mr. Foon took with him pacifists, publicists, disguised Germans, "bugs," grafters looking for a free picnic, and a few persons who shared their host's dream of "getting the boys out of the trenches by Christmas." Mr. Wilson takes diplomats, publicists, navigators, geographers, economists, cartographers, ethnographers, historians and so forth.

Yet the greatest difference of all between the atmospheres of the George Washington and the Oscar II. is psychological. Mr. Foon permitted his own Quixotic purpose to be bruised and battered by the surging multifarious opinions of his guests. He was a weak Columbus with forty Martin Pinzons. On the George Washington there is but one mind, one object, one chart.

## More Jobs Than Men.

From the Federal Employment Service itself comes full confirmation of THE SUN's warnings that our national problem now is not a labor surplus but a labor shortage.

One of the strangest things since the armistice has been the political hallucination or fake that unless the Government was careful and slow about shutting down war plants and returning munition workers to normal industrial fields the country would run into labor disturbances and social upheaval. Anybody with sense could know that this was not so, because anybody wanting to get a plumber to repair burst pipes couldn't find him. Anybody wanting carpenters to stop leaks in the roof couldn't find them. Anybody wanting masons couldn't find them. Anybody wanting any sort of skilled workmen couldn't find them. This condition of labor shortage has been true since the war ended to the same degree it was true before the war ended. Now the Federal Employment Service in Washington admits it is true. So far it has discovered more jobs looking for men than men looking for jobs.

Nevertheless, when the welfare of the country demands that we get back to a normal industrial basis at the earliest possible moment, the Government persists in continuing hundreds of thousands of wage earners on useless and costly war work. It persists in wasting not merely the labor, which is sorely needed by peace industry and peace business all over the country, but the raw material now being manufactured to no purpose whatever. It persists in wasting fuel, still going up in smoke at the munition plants by the millions of tons, when coal is urgently needed not only in the general mill and factory, but in the business house and the private home. It persists in wasting the taxpayers' money when already they are faced with bills for billions of dollars for war supplies bought before the armistice, but yet to be paid for out of tax collections and bond issue funds still to be raised.

The country wants to get back to its regular business. It is trying the best it knows how to get back to its regular business. But when the war spenders ought to cut it all out they cannot seem to make themselves quit the spending.

## Secretary McAdoo's Report.

Were Secretary McAdoo not retiring from the Treasury Department the absence from his annual report, published yesterday, of any attempt to forecast necessary measures for the financing of the Government in the future would excite surprise and cause adverse criticism. But Mr. McAdoo is quitting the job, and it would be manifestly injudicious, if not improper, for him to attempt to

lay down a programme for his successor to follow.

It is only when the details of the Treasury operations are brought together in the manner Secretary McAdoo marshals them that we get a clear idea of their complexity and magnitude. Even as he explains them it is difficult for any citizen unaccustomed to the careful study of financial statements to grasp the full significance of their astounding totals. Where millions once caused us to wonder at the resources of the nation, billions have been handed with a familiarity that does not breed contempt, but inspires astonishment; and from the fact that without throwing the whole structure of business into disarray these transactions of the Government have been carried on we obtain an idea of the solidity of our national structure.

The fact is that in such documents as that produced by Secretary McAdoo the dollar sign is a symbol of credits opened, utilized, exhausted, closed, and the figures aligned behind them mean not currency merely, but the drafts made on the resources of all agricultural, mining, manufacturing and business enterprises of the nation. Studied in the light of this understanding the figures take on new meanings and their size becomes more nearly comprehensible.

## The Action Begun by the Commercial Cable Company.

The action begun by the Commercial Cable Company in the United States District Court to restrain the Postmaster-General from continuing the enforcement of his order for the seizure and operation of the ocean cables brings this act of the Government before the courts for judicial review and the application of appropriate remedies, and because of this it is worthy of commendation.

In the court room the rights of individuals and corporations will be received that consideration which is frequently denied to them in the offices of executive functionaries. The extent of the authority conferred on the Government under war legislation and the projection of its war powers beyond the period of actual hostilities are of vital importance, not only to the proprietors of wire systems, but to the owners of every business enterprise in the country.

The political and economic disputes that have arisen over Government operation of public utilities cannot be settled until the legal status of the affected enterprises is established and the powers of the Government are clearly defined. This establishment and definition must be by judicial decisions, rendered in actions such as that brought by the Commercial Cable Company, and on its outcome the institution of other similar suits unquestionably depends.

As we understand the former Crown Prince, he was heartily in favor of the Entente all the while; and if you don't believe it there's the Verden as proof.

Rough weather on the Atlantic will make DR. GRAYSON the most important of all the Rear Admirals.

By "discrediting" the report that the United States collier Cyclops was laid up in the Kiel Canal the British Admiralty has spoiled an interesting tale of the mysterious ship's fate. If she was sunk or captured by the enemy, the fact must soon become known; if the Germans have no knowledge of her, the conclusion that she sank without leaving a trace, difficult to believe though it is, must be accepted.

All quiet on the Potomac and the Rhine, but there was marked commotion on the lower Hudson yesterday.

Women angry over munition shift off parade in Downing street in London—Newspaper headline.

As swords are beaten into ploughshares, so women war workers must learn, munitionettes should become farmerettes.

Bersing Square is not beautiful in its present condition. If the General should see it now he might be tempted to clean it up.

Those Governors who favorably and courteously responded to a suggestion made by a New York committee of competent authority that each State decorate a block of Fifth avenue as a part of the soldiers' return reception plans were not offering "charity" in this city, but giving their aid to a city asking for help in doing a gracious and patriotic service.

If the plan as proposed can be carried out it will add vast interest to the reception programme. It was an uncouth instinct which prompted an angry letter to the Governor of New York asking the States to join New York in a graceful tribute to soldiers who are returning to every State.

Will the traffic policeman most successful in catching cloudland speeders be called an "ace"?

Both to Marshall Poch and Congress the ownership and transference of locomotives presents a perplexing problem.

Well, anyway, the Statue of Liberty is going to stay here.

## The Balmey Arctic.

From the Christian Herald.  
Another cherished illusion is dispelled and relegated to the junk heap of vivid misconceptions that have suddenly faded away from the popular mind. It is much cooler in central Siberia than at Herschel Island. Even near the geographical pole the climate never gets really hot, although the mercury occasionally runs down to 60 below zero. Indeed, it was so mild and compatible with physical comfort that he usually dozed on the porch of his igloo and passed the evening in his underwear, resting at night in his sleeping bag. His underwear, by the way, was of reindeer skin with the fur side inside. He has explored some 20,000 square miles and all kinds of weather, and claims to have suffered no hardships until his return to civilization.

## WOMAN SUFFRAGE.

Another Explanation of the Southern Senators' Attitude.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—Sir: In a despatch from your special Washington correspondent November 28 he says, in referring to President Wilson's appeal to the Senate for woman suffrage: "He placed the Southern Senators who stuck by him through thick and thin in the most embarrassing position of their public careers. He put upon them the onus of being the cause of the amendment. Yet the political life of every Senator from the South would have been worth nothing the moment he voted to permit the negro woman to vote anywhere."

This statement is not justified by the facts, which are that fourteen Southern Senators did vote for this Federal suffrage amendment the day after President Wilson made his address, without any fear of danger to their political life. They were probably encouraged to do this by the fact that when this amendment was voted on in the House of Representatives last January forty-six Southern members cast their votes in favor of it, and their political life does not seem to be threatened, at least on this account.

The bogey of the "negro woman's vote" is mere camouflage to conceal seated opposition to woman suffrage itself. Not one Senator who voted against this Federal amendment would vote in favor of woman suffrage if it were an issue in his own State.

It is true that the amendment which was submitted by the Legislature of Louisiana and defeated at the recent election proposed merely to take the word "male" out of the suffrage clause in the Constitution. This was all that was needed to bar out the negro woman, and action on the amendment would have been the same whether it had been the word "male" or "white" that was stricken out. The amendment proposed merely to take the word "male" out of the suffrage clause in the Constitution. This was all that was needed to bar out the negro woman, and action on the amendment would have been the same whether it had been the word "male" or "white" that was stricken out.

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